

James Alexander Hamilton to Andrew Jackson, May 7, 1832, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

COLONEL JAMES A. HAMILTON TO JACKSON.

New York, May 7, 1832.

My dear Sir, The Bank report¹ has realized all your anticipations and consequently justified to the most sceptical or perverse opponent the course you have taken in relation to it; Should an act to extend the charter be passed at this, or any other session, which I believe is impossible you may take new or additional ground which is as stable as truth or justice; not only has it subsidized the press, but it has ruinously administered its affairs as it respects the stockholders, and most injuriously as it respects the Country. Connected with this subject and particularly its corruptions my mind has been much occupied in relation to the position of the surveyor;² And I will as I am accustomed to do on all occasions frankly express to you my views, That he has been bribed seems to be admitted on all hands and consequently that he is unworthy of the confidence of the Government. This office is one in which if he is disposed he may do great mischief and he is now exposed to ten thousand times more temptation to enrich himself at the public expense than he was before; without having the restraints which character impose and the shield it threw round him before, for Bad men before would have been afraid to approach him, now the way is not only opened to them but they are invited to pursue it.

¹ Meaning, the report of the majority of the House committee, rendered Apr. 30.

² Mordecai M. Noah.

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Again, If you may in any event or at any time be called to reject a Bill and should you as a reason for doing so urge this maladministration consistency requires that he should be first removed; Again by his removal allowing full time for a thorough investigation and his defence you throw the weight of your opinion and character into the scale with the conclusions of the committee and thus justly put a mark of opprobrium upon the Bank, more effectual and more lasting than any thing that could be done and I think by doing so you would gratify in a very high degree the Public feeling without the slightest risk of injustice. I am quite sure that your true friends as well as that portion of this community which are not partizans would receive it as a most welcome sacrifice of your private partiality to promote Public Morals. His conduct on this occasion, and in relation to our friends at Albany, and Just now as to Mr Cambreling, has striped him of favor and influence and would therefore if expediency is to be a consideration on the occasion render such a cause quite proper. I have thus reasoned this matter in this letter as I have before with myself, Without however intending to intimate any belief for I hav[e] none as to what you[r] views are.

My feelings towards Noah are not those of hostility but rather of pity and I should therefore but that I think in these cases great public ought far to outweigh all private or personal considerations be induced to plead for him. But it is my duty to say to you that his removal is here expected with the utmost confidence. . . .